

Unblock the Chakra by Lastelle21

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Avatar: The Last Airbender References, Gen, THAT BEING SAID, THIS IS NOT A CROSSOVER, inspired by atla, this is what happened when I watched season 3 and atla at the same time, timeline's a little hazy but it's 2008 and not the 80s

Language: English

Characters: Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Will Byers

Relationships: Jonathan Byers & Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jonathan Byers & Will Byers, Joyce Byers & Eleven | Jane Hopper, Will Byers & Eleven | Jane Hopper

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Summary:

In the darkness of her bedroom, El thinks that maybe she and Hang are a little alike. They've both been through a traumatic experience, both lost something valuable to them. The difference, she reckons, is that Aang got that something back while she hasn't. And couldn't she use the same process that Aang did to retrieve her powers from wherever they're locked away, somewhere deep down?

It never hurts to try.

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The episode fades out, and Eleven sits back on the couch, mind reeling.

“That was,” Will starts, but then cuts himself off.

“Yeah,” El agrees.

The finale for Avatar was fantastic. El wants to say something to Will, but she can’t find the words. They sit in silence for a few minutes, thinking on what they just watched. Will speaks first.

“So was it worth the watch?” he asks, turning to face her.

El gets what he means. The boys of the Party had been in love with the show from the moment it had aired, but El hadn’t seen it and neither had Max.

“I don’t get what the hype is about,” Max had said. “It’s a show for nerds.”

Lucas had almost broken up with her right then.

“They just need to watch it,” Dustin’d said, and that was that. The boys managed to catch El and Max up through a strategic series of recorded episodes on various tvs and an occasional DVD from Netflix. Before they’d sat down for the first episode, Max had threatened them all with bodily harm if this show turned out to not be worth the watch.

“It was worth the watch,” El says. She turns the episode over in her mind, thinking about Toph and Sokka almost dying, Azula’s weeping as Katara chained her down, Aang and Ozai...

“With the rock,” El says, “when Aang hit the rock, what happened exactly?”

Will grabs the remote and turns the tv off to stop the commercials. "Do you remember, in season two, when Azula struck Aang with lightning?"

El nods.

"Well, we know that it was a traumatic event that took away his ability to access the avatar state. I think... when he hit the rock, it unblocked his chakra, which allowed him to access the avatar state and take away Ozai's bending."

There's a tingling sensation in the back of El's neck, and she feels like there is something there, a connection that needs to be made, but Will checks his watch and says, "we should head to Cerebro. We've got to hear everyone's opinion on this ending."

So El tucks the feeling away for investigation later, and goes up to the roof, and spends the night listening to her friends argue and speculate and discuss the ending.

It isn't until she's laying in bed at 1:30 in the morning(Joyce had stuck her head through the window to yell at them to go to sleep) that she realizes the connection: she and Aang are a little in common. They'd both been through a traumatic event, and they'd both lost the ability to do something . El thinks about her powers, somehow gone. She blinks up at the dark ceiling in her room, and wonders if her powers are gone, or if they're simply blocked off, locked away somewhere inside after a traumatic event. The scars on her legs throb with phantom pain, the thin line where Jonathon had cut into her shin, and the malformed remnants of bite marks.

If El is able to unblock her chakra, maybe she could access her powers. Maybe she could even see into the Upside Down, and she could check... then they'd know for sure.

El turns over in her bed and makes up her mind to discuss it with Will tomorrow.

El doesn't go to school, not after everything that had happened. Joyce had talked to her about it one night while they were still moving in, eating the last of their pizza and sitting on overturned boxes.

"Honey," Joyce had said. "We've got to talk about school—"

The thought had made El sick. "Don't. Don't make me go. Please."

Joyce looked at El for a long moment, and then nodded softly. And that was that.

El still wakes up early with Will, though. She gets dressed and eats whatever breakfast Jonathan has thrown together in the kitchen, sits on the steps to watch them climb into the car and pull out of the driveway, with the promise of being back later.

She pitches her idea to Will over scrambled eggs and bacon. "It could work," she concludes, while Will chews thoughtfully.

"It could," Will amends. "The worst we could do is give it a shot and nothing happens. Give me two days to get everything together. Oh, you know? Dustin would probably be a great help--"

"I don't want to tell everyone," El interrupts. She's thought about it. Her friends and family love her, she knows, believe in her, but. She doesn't want to get their hopes up and be faced with their disappointment that she's still ordinary. For some reason, after all these months with Will, she trusts him not to do that to her.

"Okay," Will agrees easily. He crosses his heart. "Just the two of us."

"The two of you what?" Jonathan says, coming back into the kitchen while pulling his jacket on.

"Secret sibling stuff," Will tells him. "You wouldn't understand."

Jonathan's dramatic proclamations of betrayal succeed in making both of them laugh, and also in causing them to leave late. El waves them off from the porch.

She has her own studies to do, a schedule drawn up by Joyce and

Jonathan and Will and her friends, to keep her on track for the next school year, which she promised she would attend. She works by the window in the computer room, says good morning to Joyce when she comes in to work.

El stares down at her math problems. Two days, Will had said. She could wait two days. She had wanted to start right away, but if she trusts will to be her Guru Pathik, which she does, she should let him do what he needs to prepare.

The days go by fast. Joyce goes to work, El meanders outside. It's too cold for her to work out on the back porch anymore, but she still likes to feel the sunlight on her skin, gaze at the sky and know there's so much more out there. Jonathan and Will come back from school. Jonathan checks her schoolwork while Will squints at the computer, writing things in a notebook she's never seen before.

Will disappears that afternoon after declaring his intent to "scout for an appropriate spot," and El does her best to keep Jonathan from worrying by demanding a crash course in old school photography, which leads to an impromptu photo session.

El speaks with Max on the phone, helps Joyce with dinner, steals the phone from Jonathan to talk to Mike and Lucas, and finds herself sitting on the front porch two days later, waiting for Jonathan's car.

The bus comes instead, Will climbing off and walking up the driveway. He smiles at El when he reaches the porch. "Jonathan's staying after to develop photos," he says, in lieu of a greeting. "Today's the day, meet me in the kitchen."

El follows him inside, feeling... nervous? She thinks of the definition of nervous. It doesn't quite fit. Maybe... unsettled. That's a better word. She's feeling unsettled and sits at the kitchen table, waiting while Will orients himself in the kitchen.

"First things first," Will announces. "Guru Pathik insisted that Aang drink onion-banana juice."

El blinks at him. She'd expected... not that. Onion-banana juice? "No."

"Hear me out. You remember that episode, we watched it at Mike's house. I think. Actually, it might've been Lucas's."

"It was Dustin's."

"Right! Well. I did some research and it's a real thing. I found a recipe, and we've already got all the stuff we need here."

"Will."

"El. It'll be fine. I'm a great cook, better than Mom, at least. And I have this bad boy to keep me on track." He waves a piece of paper at her. El snatches it and gives it a cursory once-over. It's a recipe for onion-banana juice, the shortest recipe she's ever seen. El is not convinced, but Will's already digging out the blender from wherever they hid it when they moved in, and El's. Well. A little curious.

They manage not to burn the kitchen down, though they have a spectacular argument about what a caramelized onion should look like. They compromise somewhere between yellow-ish and not-black, throw it into the blender with the banana. El insists Will drink some too, since it was all Guru Pathik consumed, after all.

"Cheers," Will grumbles, clinking his glass against hers.

They down it together. It's... surprisingly not terrible. It just tastes like onion and bananas, to El. In fact, she could see it now: drink enough of it, and she might even like it. Will, however, gags and rushes over to the sink to spit his sip out.

"That's *awful*," he moans.

"It's pretty good," El says. It isn't, but the horror on Will's face makes her laugh.

"How can you say that?"

El shrugs, downs another sip. "I'm stronger than you," she says.

Will laughs, nods his agreement. "Yeah you are. C'mon. Let's clean up and head out of here."

El puts the rest of the juice in a pitcher and washes the blender while Will scrapes the remaining onions out of the pan and cleans the cutting board and when they're done, Will grabs a bag from upstairs and they begin their trek outside.

Will leads her out into the woods, to a little area deep enough that she's sure they won't be disturbed. He picks a spot and pulls a checkered picnic blanket out of his bag, spreads it out. They sit down face to face, legs crossed. "I've given it some thought," Will said, still rummaging around in his bag. He produces the radio she's seen on Joyce's dresser.

"I think there were a lot of factors at play for Aang. I went to the computer lab yesterday, looked up some photos of the episodes. They went to a new place each time, pertinent to whichever chakra they were working on. I thought this would be good enough for the Earth chakra."

"The one we're doing today."

"Yes."

The last items Will pulls out of his bag is the notebook he'd been writing in yesterday and a black bandana.

"Okay. We're going to use avatar as a blueprint, but we're trying to make this as relevant to you as possible." El watches him turn the radio on and switch it to static, passes El the bandana. Holding it in her hand, she's suddenly nervous. She hasn't tried this since she lost her powers. What if it doesn't work? What if nothing happens?

"El," Will says. "Remember. You're not trying to access the Upside Down or wherever you go. We're dealing with..." he consults his notebook. "Emotional muck."

El squeezes the bandana in her hands, breathes deep. "Okay."

While El ties the bandana over her head, Will visibly settles into his roll. She gives him a minute to let him do his thing, not ready to pull the bandana over her eyes.

Will exhales and meets her eyes. "I must warn you: opening the

chakras is an intense experience, and once you begin the process you cannot stop until all seven are open.”

“I’m ready,” El says.

El drags the headband over her eyes and forces herself to focus. It could’ve been so easy to just slip into that space, if she had her powers. But she doesn’t. All she has is this vague hope based off of a tv show her friends made her watch.

“Okay El,” Will says. “Focus on the sound of my voice.”

El breathes like Katara breathed in that one episode where she was learning to waterbend, in through the nose and out through the mouth. She tries to let everything fall away—the gentle sounds of the forest bending around them, Will’s quiet breathing, the hundreds of thoughts floating through her mind. Another deep inhale, another deep exhale.

“The first chakra we must open is the Earth Chakra, located at the base of the spine.” Will’s voice sounds so far away, like El has successfully managed to ascend into a higher plane of existence. She concentrates on the base of her spine, attempting to pool each breath into that area and exhaling up and out. She thinks she can feel a vague tingling but doesn’t dwell on it too long. Will’s voiced wades back to her, through the darkness and over the fading sound of static on the radio.

“The Earth Chakra is the one that controls survival and deals with fear. In order to survive, you must handle the fear that debilitates you—El, dig deep and bring forth your greatest fears. Let them wash over you.”

They come, all in a rush, and El rears back, her breathing disrupted. She sees the massive form of the Mind Flayer hanging over her in the mall, horror splitting the faces of her friends when they were at the cabin and the Mind Flayer attacked. She sees Mike screaming about a trap and Hop holding him back. Her grip on her knees tightened, and she shakes, shakes with the fear of her friends dying, from her not being able to protect them, just like she hadn’t been able to protect her *dad*. Will’s voice breaks through, an echo of Joyce, telling her to

breathe. El sucks in a breath and pushes one out. The images continue to flash in her mind. She thinks she can feel someone's hand on her own.

"You have to let it go, El," someone says. "Let it go."

El digs down. This chakra deals with survival. She can do this. She can let go of this feeling. El lets the images wash over her, and lets herself feel the fear for one second, then two, then three. Then, with one final exhale, she lets it go. The memories dissipate, and for a moment there is nothing save for a good feeling, one of strength. And something like relief lingers, before it is replaced by the sound of static from the radio.

El is suddenly aware of the ground beneath her, the sounds of the wilderness, Will's hand on hers. She pulls off her blindfold and is surprised to find it wet. She has to blink the harsh sun out of her eyes, and when she did she finds their little sitting area relatively untouched, but Will's eyes were wide as saucers.

El sniffed. "What happened?"

"Uh. You were really agitated. I was going to stop, but Aang was agitated too, so I assumed it was working. Kind of rolled with it. Did you do it?"

El nodded. "It worked. I feel... not lighter. Better."

"That makes sense. I think, if this is a real thing, then we'd have to unblock all the chakras in order to really feel it."

El looks around and tries to fight off the disappointment that nothing noticeable has changed. Will must see her expression because he says, "Remember, nothing happened for Aang until all of his chakra was unblocked. It was just, feelings, a greater sense of ease."

"I feel it. More at ease. I just hoped—" she sighs.

"There's no need to rush it, no matter what. The world isn't end—" he frowns, as if he knows he'll jinx them if he finishes that sentence. "We don't have to deal with a comet coming at the end of summer. We have time. We can do the water chakra on tomorrow. Jonathan

said he'll drive us around."

"Saturday," El says. One day at a time. She thinks it's a good plan and gives her time to deal with this newfound lightness she has. She sticks out her hand, and Will shakes it.

"Let's head back home."

Joyce is leaning against the kitchen counter, a steaming coffee mug in her hand, when they come back into the house. She smiles at them as they unload their stuff onto the table, but the strained little crease between her eyebrows tells El that they'd worried her. Will can tell too, because he goes around the table and wraps her up in a hug.

"Sorry for worrying you," he says.

El comes around joined the fray. "Me too."

Joyce doesn't even try to deny it. She sets her mug onto the counter and hugs them both back. "I'm never not worried," she says. "But I trust you guys to take of yourselves." The three of them pull back. "So. Who would like to explain to me what 'unblocking chakra in the woods' means?"

That gets a giggle out of them. El had thought the note they taped to the fridge was a little vague, and now it's vagueness is coming out full force. Will looks to El, probably thinking of their tell-no one pact. El didn't want to tell anyone, but this was Joyce, and Joyce could be trusted, after all. "We have this plan," El starts.

"Theory," Will corrects.

"Theory," El repeats. "We have a theory that might get my powers back."

Joyce's eyebrows have slowly crept up during the course of the conversation. "Oh? And what does that entail?"

El and Will share a look. Joyce picks up her mug. "I'm going to have to sit down for this, huh?"

El nods. They sit at the table and explain to Joyce, with much backtracking, what their theory is and where it's coming from. When Joyce gets it, repeats it back to them and meets their approval, she sits back. El notes the troubled tilt of her eyebrows, Jonathan comes into the kitchen, looks between the three of them on his way to the fridge.

"Family meeting?" he asks. El watches, fascinated, as he pulls the pitcher of onion-banana juice out of the fridge.

"Not without you," Will says. He and El share a look.

Jonathan turns his back to grab a glass from the cabinet and Joyce points at the pitcher. "What is that—"

"No," El whispers, at the same time Will mutters, "wait no Mom give him a second."

Joyce drops her hand as Jonathan turns back around to find them all looking at him. "What?"

"We missed you," El blurts out.

"So much," Will adds.

Jonathan makes a face at them, like, *you think I'm buying this?* But he pours a glass anyway. "Uh-huh. Anyone want to tell me what this is before I drink it?"

"Just drink it, Jonathan," Joyce tells him. El loves that Joyce is automatically on their side; she's fighting off a smile.

"You won't regret it," says Will.

"It's pretty good," says El.

Jonathan sighs, but he's smiling. "It won't kill me?"

"No...t really?"

That's good enough for him, because he lifts the glass and gulps it down. Jonathan's reaction is equal to Will's, if not more so, and

makes El laugh until she cries.

El hears the quiet knock on the door and wishes for a moment that she didn't have to expel the energy of calling out and saying it's okay to come in. She does, and is unsurprised when Joyce pokes her head in.

"Can we talk? It won't be more than... five minutes. I know you're tired."

El nods, scooches over on the bed so Joyce can sit on top of the covers.

"I've been thinking," she begins, "about what you and Will told me earlier. About your plan. And I know it's to get your powers back, I understand that sweetie, but..." Joyce trails off, looking around the room. El gives her the time to find her words. Sometimes she needs a minute too.

"You're sure that's the only reason you're doing it?" Joyce settles on finally. She's looking at El carefully, and all of a sudden, El knows she knows. El doesn't think Will does, or Jonathan, but Joyce?

El has been doing fine, but she cracks a little. Joyce wraps an arm around El's shoulders and brings her close. A few months ago, Joyce had announced that she was done crying. True to form, she doesn't shed a single tear, but El can still feel the sadness radiating from her.

"I just want to check," El says, voice hoarse. She just wants to know that he's really not out there, trying to reach them, to reach *her* and failing because of some stupid mental block. She sighs, wipes at her cheeks. "I want my powers back. But I want him back more."

Joyce gives her a squeeze. "I know. Me too." El remembers Mike's mom whispering about Joyce into the phone one time, her expression forlorn. "Unlucky in love," she'd said. It isn't fair, El thinks.

"But. What if— he's really gone? Or what if he's there and I just can't

reach him?”

Joyce sighs, and when she speaks it sounds like something she’s thought about a thousand times. “The harsh reality of it is, we don’t know. We might not ever know. I wanted to tell you, that while you and Will work the chakras, or—is that right? Chakras?”

“Yes.”

“While you work through the chakras, I don’t want you to hold yourself back because you’re scared that he won’t be there at the end, or that your powers won’t come back. I’m not saying it won’t hurt if those goals aren’t achieved, because it will. It’ll..”

“Suck?”

Joyce laughs. “Yes, it’ll suck. But it’ll be okay too. Because you know you gave it your all. Hope with all your might, cross all your fingers and toes, and it’ll work out no matter what. Okay?”

“Okay.”

Joyce sits with El for a few minutes longer, before climbing off the bed and turning out her lights. El stares up at the ceiling for a while after she’s gone, coming to terms with the glimmer of hope rising in her chest. If this works, she might be able to find her dad and bring him home. It’s that comforting, exciting thought, that accompanies her as she falls asleep.

Author's Note:

Thanks for reading 🍷🍷🍷🍷